

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the third paragraph on page 1 with the following paragraph:

~~Fluorosteroids~~~~Fluorsteroids~~ represent useful antiinflammatory compounds and it is known that stereoisomers have different pharmacological efficiencies. It is also known that 6 α -fluoropregnane derivatives have in general a higher efficiency than corresponding 6 β -fluoro analogues. Several processes have been developed for obtaining 6 α -fluoropregnanes, but all these processes suffer from poor stereoselectivity. There is a need for a process giving a higher ratio of 6 α - to 6 β -stereoisomers for a more economic industrial-scale manufacture.

Please replace the last paragraph on page 4 with the following paragraph:

Preferred substituents for R₁ as phenyl are fluorine, chlorine, hydroxy, dimethylamino, methyl, ethyl, methoxy, ethoxy and methoxycarbonyl. Examples for substituted phenyl are 4-fluorophenyl, 2,4-difluorophenyl, 2,4,6-trifluorophenyl, 4-chlorophenyl, 2,4-dichlorophenyl, 2- or 4-hydroxyphenyl, 4-methylphenyl, 4-ethylphenyl, 2,4-dimethylphenyl, 2,4-diethylphenyl, 2,4,6-trimethylphenyl, 4-methoxyphenyl, 4-ethoxyphenyl, 2,4-dimethoxyphenyl, 2,4-diethoxyphenyl, 2,4,6-trimethoxyphenyl, 2-methyl-4-fluorophenyl, 2-methyl-4-chlorophenyl~~2-methyl-4chlorophenyl~~, 2- or 3- or 4-methoxycarbonylphenyl.

Please replace the second paragraph on page 5 with the following paragraph:

Suitable electrophilic fluorination agents are well known in the art and, in part, commercially available. These compounds include ~~ean~~ for example N-fluorosulfonamides, N-fluoropyridinium salts, N-fluorobis(trifluoromethanesulfonyl)imides, N-alkyl-N'-fluoro-1,4-diazoniabicyclo[2.2.2]octane salts, N-fluoro-N'-hydroxy-1,4-diazoniabicyclo[2.2.2]octane salts, and perchloryl fluoride.

Please replace the second paragraph on page 6 with the following paragraph:

The N-atoms of the amine may be substituted with C₁-C₁₂alkyl, preferably C₁-C₆alkyl and most preferably C₁-C₄alkyl, C₃-C₈cycloalkyl, preferably C₅-C₆cycloalkyl, C₄-C₁₀heterocycloalkyl, preferably C₄-C₈heterocycloalkyl, C₆-C₁₀aryl, C₇-C₁₀aralkyl, C₅-C₁₀heteroaryl or C₅-C₁₀heteroaralkyl. The N-atom of the amines can be part of an aliphatic or aromatic mono-cyclic or polycyclic aliphatic or aromatic ring (cyclic amines) and said N-atoms can be substituted with one residue as mentioned above. Alkyl groups at the N-atoms may be substituted, for example with C₃-C₈cycloalkyl, C₄-C₁₀heterocycloalkyl, C₁-C₆alkyl, C₁-C₆alkoxy or hydroxyl,[[.]] cycloalkyl, heterocycloalkyl, aryl,

heteroaryl, aralkyl and heteroaralkyl as well as rings of cyclic amines can be substituted for example with C₁-C₆alkyl, C₁-C₆alkoxy or hydroxyl.

Please replace the last paragraph on page 8 with the following paragraph:

The process of the invention may be carried out by dissolving or suspending compounds of formula II in a suitable solvent and cooling the solution to temperatures below 20°C and preferably about 10°C. The amine salt, or approximately equivalent amounts of an amine and a strong acid, are then added, followed by the addition of the electrophilic fluorination agent. The fluorination is an exothermal reaction and care must be taken at this stage that the temperature does not exceed values which would effect and degrade compounds of formulae I and II. The fluorination agent is added preferably dropwise or in portions and the reaction mixture is preferably cooled during this operation. The reaction mixture is stirred after the addition of the fluorination agent and the temperature may be increased to ambient values, preferably room temperature. The reaction progress can be controlled by the chromatographic determination of the starting material of formula I. The reaction is terminated when presence of the starting material can no longer be detected. The reaction time may be from 0.5 to 8 hours. The desired compounds of formula II can be isolated from the reaction mixture in known manner, for example in removing the solvent and filtering or extracting the resulting suspension, followed by re-crystallisation from a suitable solvent, for example from an alkanol.

Please replace the second paragraph on page 10 with the following paragraph:

Example A1: Preparation of 9 β ,11 β -epoxy-16 β -methyl-3,17,21-trihydroxy-pregna-1,3,5-triene-20-one-21-acetate-3-benzoate
~~9 β ,11-epoxy-16 α -methyl-3,17,21-trihydroxy-pregna-1,3,5-triene-20-one-21-acetate-3-benzoate~~